

VZCZCXRO4036
RR RUEHHM RUEHLN RUEHMA RUEHPB RUEHPOD
DE RUEHIL #5302 3520205
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 180205Z DEC 07
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3945
INFO RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHDC
RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA
RUEAUSA/HHS PHS WASHDC
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI 8426
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE 4361
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR 2985
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 7925
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 2481
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 0356

UNCLAS ISLAMABAD 005302

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SENSITIVE

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KFLU](#) [TBIO](#) [EAGR](#) [AMGT](#) [PK](#)

SUBJECT: PAKISTAN CONFIRMS FIRST CASES OF AVIAN INFLUENZA IN HUMANS

11. (SBU) Summary: The Pakistan National Institute of Health (NIH) confirmed on December 15 that six individuals have tested positive for H5N1 Avian Influenza (AI). One of the confirmed AI patients died in hospital. This marks the first reported cases of AI in humans in Pakistan. World Health Organization (WHO) representatives are currently on the ground along with a Centers for Disease Control (CDC) medical epidemiologist. A team from the Cairo-based U.S. Naval Medical Research Unit 3 (NAMRU-3) is expected in country shortly. End Summary.

12. (U) The text of the Ministry of Health press release is as follows:

Press Release: Ministry of Health Taking Necessary Action for the Control of Avian Influenza Outbreak in NWFP.

Islamabad, 15 December 2007: The National Institute of Health under the auspices of the Ministry of Health has tested patients and contacts suspected for Avian Influenza in late October, 2007. Six cases were found positive for H5N1 Avian Influenza virus, five of them from Abbottabad and one from Mansehra district. Five of them have fully recovered. One of the confirmed cases died in hospital, while his brother who could not be tested has also died.

To avert the potential spread of this infection to humans, the Ministry of Health has implemented the following control activities:

- Investigation and sampling of case and contacts, and the organization of active surveillance for the early detection of infection.
- Ensuring standard treatment to all detected cases and contacts.
- Identification of isolation wards/rooms in all referral hospitals in the area and the nomination of focal persons to ensure proper case management and early notification of suspected cases.
- Ensuring an early stock piling of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to ensure the necessary protection of health providers.
- Ensuring a preliminary stock of oseltamivir for prophylaxis and treatment.

The Ministry of Health is undertaking these effective interventions in close collaboration with the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock, the Health Department of the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP), WHO and UNICEF. The Ministry of Health will maintain this measure to ensure the health and well-being of the population and avert the threat from avian influenza in Pakistan.

13. (SBU) A team of three WHO epidemiologists, two from WHO headquarters in Geneva one from the WHO's Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office, is currently in Islamabad. The team is reviewing data from all confirmed and suspected cases and will monitor infection control measures at hospitals in Peshawar and Abbottabad, the sites of patient infection and hospitalization. A medical epidemiologist from the influenza division of the CDC is currently in Islamabad and will work with the WHO team. Following a direct WHO request, a team from the U.S. Naval Medical Research Unit 3 (NAMRU-3) is en route from Cairo to assist in data collection and confirmation. The team is scheduled to arrive in Islamabad on December 18. Post continues to monitor the situation and will coordinate with the WHO and NAMRU-3 teams.

PATTERSON